GEOLOGISTS' GUIDANCE FOR DESCRIBING COAL TAR CONTAMINATION

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR MGP SITES

The following guidance should be used when logging visible coal tar. This guidance has been developed to make the logging procedure more consistent from person to person, so that logs can be used in a general way to aid in determining the extent of coal tar contamination.

- **Coal tar stained:** Use when there is relatively slight contamination that appears as staining or mottling. This description works especially well in fine grained formations like glacial till or when describing coal tar occurrence on fracture surfaces. Modifiers such as slightly or heavily make this description more detailed. Make sure that natural staining is logged differently than staining resulting from coal tar.

- **Coal tar coated:** Use when there is relatively slight contamination. This description works especially well in coarse grained formations such as sand and gravel.

- **Coal tar in fractures, voids, or root vesicles:** Use when pure phase coal tar is present in fractures, voids, or root vesicles. This description can be used in conjunction with other descriptions such as "coal tar stained."

- **Coal tar saturated:** Use when pure phase coal tar is saturating the formation and, if below the water table, appears to displace the groundwater.

- **Coal tar with ...:** Coal tar can be used as a logging description if it is the major component of what you are logging. This often happens when drilling into source structures.

Coal tar can be viscous or runny. Descriptions of viscosity should be used at the discretion of the engineer/geologist.

Make every effort to distinguish coal tar contamination from contamination resulting from other sources such as petroleum products. Avoid general terms such as "oily" or "tarry" that could imply more than one source.
